

Northampton Mercury

THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2015

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LUCIUS TO BECOME A BILLBOARD STAR

SEE PAGE 3



MULTI-MILLION POUND BID TO DEVELOP ST EDMUND'S

CARE HOME PLAN PROVOKES OBJECTIONS AND A PETITION OF SUPPORT

Planning officers have given the go-ahead in principle to a multi-million pound retirement village on the site of an eyesore former hospital in Northampton.

The plans by Cyprus-based Kayalef Holdings to covert the former St Edmund's Hospital site on Wellingborough Road into around 130 care apartments and a 62 bed specialist care home.

The planned care home would offer round-the-clock elderly support and the application is due to go before Northampton Borough council's planning board next week.

Papers released by the authority show council officers have recommend planning board members approve the bid.

The report says: "It is considered that the broad principle of the development is acceptable and would result

in significant public benefit in bringing a long vacant and derelict site back into a viable use."

However as the plan would see 'significant alterations' made to the listed elements of the 1837 built former workhouse, with parts of it outlined for demolition, the plans have drawn some objections from heritage protection organisations.

The Victorian Society says the former infirmary, school house and nurses' accommodation are important parts of the 'architectural and historic context of the former workhouse'.

The organisation outlined its objections: "Due to the substantial and unjustified harm that would be caused by implementation of the works proposed, we object to the application and urge you to refuse it consent."

Swan Valley based Very

Healthcare Group has objected to the application because it says there is no demand for a retirement village at the St Edmund's site.

Its previous owners, Rochmills, were granted permission for a care facility there in 2010, but never commenced building work.

However a 20 signature petition has been received by the borough council in support of the scheme, signed by those living in and around Exeter Place.

The petition demands to see the St Edmund's site 'sorted out as quickly as possible', adding that it 'has been an eyesore long enough,' and has become a hotspot for fires, 'squatters and antisocial behaviour'.

The planning committee meeting which will consider the plan, is due to take place on Tuesday, June 9, at 6pm in the Jeffrey Room of the Guildhall.



Plans for the St Edmund's Hospital site

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Johnston Press Weekly



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Our Lucius is UK's happiest cat ... and that's official!

By YVONNE MARTIN
Deputy editor
yvonne.martin@jpress.co.uk

A national competition to find the happiest cat has been won by a moggy from Northampton.

Lucius, who was injured in a road accident two months ago and nearly died, beat all his rivals in the competition run by O2.

Following a rigorous audition process in front of a judging panel including celebrity cat lover Sarah Harding he took the prize.

Despite suffering from a 'miserable' road accident two months ago, the winning cat managed to woo judges. Lu-

cius was given the title of UK's Happiest Cat after impressing the judges with his bright two toned eyes, soft fur, whisker length, calm temperament and warm 'dog like' personality.

Lucius will now become the feline face of the next phase of O2's £8m advertising campaign for O2 Refresh tariff.

Having flashed his striking grin once again for the cameras, Lucius will soon be enjoying the good life and a year's supply of cat food.

Lucius' smile featured on major digital billboard sites Holborn Eye and The Two Towers on May 21.

The story of Lucius' road to fame is also told in a short documentary launched alongside his big break.

The short film chronicles the tough road to recovery Lucius walked.

Jess Revitt, Lucius' owner and a sixth form student from Northampton, said: "Just two months ago Lucius was run over and nearly died.

"We thought he'd never smile again.

"Now, after a miraculous recovery our beautiful cat will be famous in an O2 Refresh advert and using his smile to cheer up the nation.

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Lucius the cat, pictured above with owner Jess Revitt, will now appear in advertising.

Lucius the cat, from Northampton, is pictured left with celebrity cat lover Sarah Harding, who was part of the judging panel.

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COMMUNITY



Greengrocer comes to student's rescue

■ A greengrocer has been helping a University of Northampton degree student with her final major project by providing a steady supply of onion skins.

■ Brian Harradine, of Harradine's on Wellingborough Road,

Northampton, has been helping out Charly Jansson who is producing a sustainably aware fabric project for her degree.

■ She has been using natural resources such as onion skins, red cabbage and pomegranate skins to dye

naturally sourced fabrics.

■ Charly needed a vast quantity of skins to dye all the fabric she wanted, so to help her out staff at the shop would save a batch of onion skins at the end of each week in order to keep her supplied.

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Trevor Skidmore feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 10 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although

that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service the Northampton, Kettering, Wellingborough & Corby areas and Trevor is finding that his

approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for,

which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Trevor a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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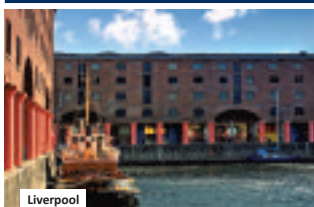
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Outstanding Ofsted report for school

By CALLUM JONES
Reporter
callum.jones@jpress.co.uk

A primary school in Northampton is celebrating after being judged an 'outstanding' school by Ofsted inspectors.

The report, released this month, said Whitehills Primary School provides high-quality teaching and learning.

The report, released this month, said Whitehills Primary School provides high-quality teaching and learning.

The two-day inspection took place in April and the school was said to give children an exceptional start to their learning. Children were described as courteous and respectful, articulate learners with a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning, enthusiastic to contribute in lessons and supportive of each other.

The school was seen to give excellent personal support and guidance to pupils, particularly in matters of safety.

Teaching across the whole school was described as outstanding with pupils being taught in a vibrant and stimulating learning environment.

Achievement of the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs, together with the associated additional learning support, was also recognised as outstanding.

Ofsted's report indicated that the school's "skilful" governors contributed effectively to the direction of the school, providing strong support and challenge and that



Headteacher Robert Hardcastle at Whitehills Primary School which is celebrating its 'outstanding' rating.

the headteacher and school leaders provided "inspirational leadership".

Ofsted also praised the school for working hard to develop close relationships with parents, ensuring that they are comfortable raising any concerns.

Headteacher Robert Hardcastle said: "We are delighted that Ofsted has acknowledged how much teaching and learning has improved at our school.

"Focussing on improving the pedagogy of all adults who work in our setting has been the first priority for the last four years. We are really pleased that the Ofsted team could see and report on how hard our children work, how supportive our parents are

and the excellence in the quality of teaching and learning at Whitehills.

"While we are pleased to receive this grading and have such an effusive report, we are not complacent and will continue to focus on putting children first and teaching them to the very highest standard."

The school's chair of governors, Harvie Hughes, added: "This is a great result for our school. I am absolutely delighted that the effort and achievement since the last inspection has now been recognised by Ofsted. However, though we are 'outstanding', we will not rest on our laurels. We will continue to focus on the children and ensure our teaching reflects this very high standard."

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Army centre revamp 'progressing well'

Work is progressing on Northampton's Clare Street Army Reserve Centre.

The make-over will bring it in line with other training facilities in the region.

The East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) is leading the renovation project, which includes the centre getting a new drill hall floor, new office spaces and a new staircase. The association will also be making sure general maintenance and redecoration works are completed to a high standard.

Martin Capewell, head of estates at East Midlands RFCA, said: "We are delighted to be completing the much-needed maintenance works at Clare Street Army Reserve Centre, which is a Grade II listed building. The current drill hall floor, where much of the reservists' training is completed, was originally laid in the 1960s and its surface is now uneven. We are planning



The Army Reserve Centre in Clare Street, Northampton, is undergoing refurbishment work

to install new flooring in this area as well as open up the ceiling to reveal some original beams. This will increase the amount of natural light in the training space and give the area a much more open feel.

"We are also in the early stages of renovating numerous corridors, staircases, offices and the officers mess which can be used for formal meetings or social activities," he added. "The works are running on time so we hope the

overall project will be complete by autumn this year."

Clare Street Army Reserve Centre is 104 Battalion and 118 Recovery Company's HQ. Both are part of the British Army's Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers (REME).

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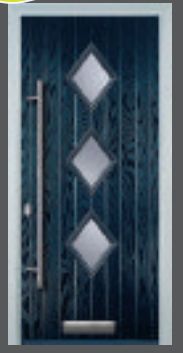
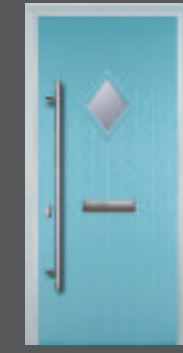
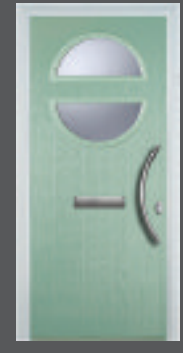
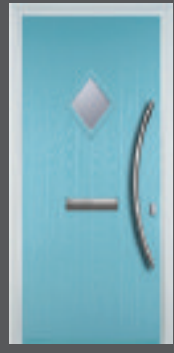
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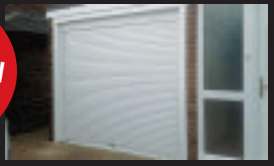
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Sir Ian's visit inspires NSB pupils and staff

By CALLUM JONES
Reporter
callum.jones@jpress.co.uk

Star of stage and screen Sir Ian McKellan caused an 'absolute sensation' when he visited Northampton School for Boys to discuss lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights.

Sir Ian, a human rights campaigner and co-founder of Stonewall, visited the school to meet students, tour the school and judge posters aimed at tackling discrimination.

Assistant head Lindsay Greenaway, who arranged the visit, said students and staff alike were left starstruck by the legendary actor.

"Sir Ian caused a ripple of excitement, shaking hands and greeting all those he met as he toured the school, in between talking to students at specially organised assemblies," she said.

"You could have heard a pin drop when he walked onto the stage and the moment when he asked if the students knew what will happen if they did not study properly for their exams and de-



Sir Ian McKellan visited Northampton School for Boys to talk about tackling discrimination and bullying

livered, reprising the role of Gandalf, the iconic "You Shall Not Pass!" was a moment to cherish by all," she added.

Sir Ian spoke to pupils about discrimination and praised the school for its efforts.

"You are fortunate to be at Northampton School for Boys and in this country," he said.

"NSB is a leading school, actively dealing with these issues in a variety of ways. Get it right in this school and take it into the wider community.

"We are all minorities through being individuals. No two people are the same but without our dif-

ferences it would be a very boring world so the answer is to treat everyone with respect."

Headteacher Richard Bernard said it was a privilege to welcome Sir Ian to the school.

"Sir Ian gave inspiring talks throughout the day to hundreds of students on the imperative value of equality to individuals and society as a whole, with a particular emphasis on LGBTQ rights.

"His words have served to cement even further the zero tolerance approach that the school has towards bullying and inequality in any form."

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2013

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Peugeot

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2008

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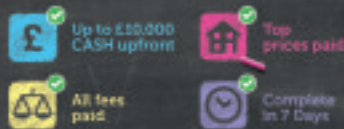
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SPORT

Hartley's staying at Saints

Captain dismisses speculation linking him with switch to France

RUGBY

Dylan Hartley insists there is no chance he will change his mind over a big-money move to France, despite his England omission.

Hartley was dropped from the World Cup training squad after picking up a four-week ban for headbutting Saracens hooker Jamie George in the Aviva Premiership play-off semi-final at Franklin's Gardens. That would have ruled the Saints player out of England's World Cup opener against Fiji, with Hartley not free to play again until September 21.

And Stuart Lancaster decided it was too big a risk to begin the campaign with three hookers.

But Hartley is refusing to give up on his England career and will not turn his back on Saints, stressing he remains loyal to the club and assuring fans the move to Montpellier that he turned down earlier this year is not back on the agenda.

"There has been speculation that I might change my mind about a big-money move to France, but no chance," wrote the Saints skipper in his column in *The Sun*.

"Northampton is my club

and they have always stood by me. Just because I have had a personal setback, it doesn't mean you run away from 'it all'.

"You front up and get on with it. That has always been my philosophy."

And on his England future, Hartley said: "There is absolutely no truth at all in the speculation that I may quit international rugby."

"I feel I can still contribute and as long as Stuart Lancaster thinks that too, it's all that matters."

"Everyone else can speculate as much as they want to but I am still only 29 and I believe I still have a lot to offer."

"Kevin Mealamu was 33 when he was New Zealand's starting hooker in the 2011 World Cup final and is still going well at 36."

"By coincidence, I'll be 33 when the 2019 World Cup is played, so who knows what the future holds?"

"The conversation I had with Stuart will remain a private one. We are both clear on exactly where he and I stand on the matter. There is hope, though."

"Of course, what happens next depends on me sorting out my disciplinary issues. And actually, week to week, my discipline is fine."

"I've been unlucky with

getting it wrong on the big stage a few times now. Maybe it's down to emotions?"

"I know that I care so much when I play and, the bigger the game, the harder I probably try."

"That, sometimes, has gone wrong — and my timing has never been good either."

"I don't have a degree in psychology though so I'll leave it up to the 'experts' to make their case and concentrate harder on trying to keep my emotions in check during those flashpoint moments."

"I can't find the words to describe properly just how hurt and upset I am at what has happened."

Hartley, who missed the 2013 Lions tour after being banned for 11 weeks for verbally abusing referee Wayne Barnes in the Premiership final, is now setting his sight on getting in peak condition for Saints' pre-season campaign ahead of the Aviva Premiership kick-off on the weekend of October 16.

He said: "I'm not spending every minute of the day cursing my luck at being forced to miss a World Cup on home soil, just two years after another ban made me miss the Lions tour of Australia."

"I've got to accept it and move on. Set new goals and targets and get to work."



STAYING PUT Saints skipper Dylan Hartley

Cobblers snap up Lelan

THE Cobblers have signed Derby County defender Josh Lelan on a 12-month contract.

The 20-year-old, who can play right back, in central defence or in midfield, was spotted by Town's head of recruitment Martin Foyle.

Foyle recommended Lelan to manager Chris Wilder, and he has decided to give the youngster a chance at Sixfields.

Lelan came through the youth ranks at Derby, but never made a first team

FOOTBALL

appearance for the Rams.

A regular in Derby's Under-21 Premier League team, Lelan has played senior football though, enjoying a month-long loan stint at Gateshead in 2013, and a two-month spell at Swindon Town in Sky Bet League One last season.

In all, he has made six senior starts and four substitute appearances, and will provide competition at Sixfields for Brendan

Moloney, as well as the central defenders.

"Josh is a good age at 20, he is mobile and is a good size at six foot," said Foyle.

"He is tenacious and honest, and I think that is the type of player we need to rack the squad up with, players with a chance of getting into the first team."

"They are the type of players I have been looking at for Chris Wilder and Alan Knill, and hopefully Josh will come in and get off to a good start."

Ripley blames batters

HEAD coach David Ripley was left ruing a lack of runs after Northants Steelbacks were beaten on the final ball by Birmingham Bears in the NatWest T20 Blast last Friday night.

Steelbacks could only make 146 for seven from their 20 overs, with Richard Levi's 58 from 48 balls the main contribution.

The Bears, who won the T20 competition last season, looked set to cruise home as William Porterfield steered the ship at the County Ground.

CRICKET

But his unbeaten 55 was only just enough, with the champions needing four byes from the last delivery of the match to secure the win.

And Ripley said: "We were short of runs, probably 20 because 160 is par score. It's a decent batting wicket."

"We fought hard with the ball and in the field and we almost pulled it out of the bag, but 48 dot balls, only a run a ball in the middle of the innings and a limp finish from

us left us short and that was the difference.

"Richard played well and we had a good powerplay. We were 47 for one at the end of that and were off and running. There's a lot of firepower in our batting line-up but we've talked a lot about not leaving it to each other. We don't want that, people have got to stand up and see us through."

Steelbacks are back in home T20 action on Friday when they host Worcestershire Rapids (start 6.30pm).